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USIB-D-69.1/1  
9 June 1959

UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: U. S. Organizations Involved in Photographic Intelligence

The attached CIA memorandum on "U. S. Organizations Involved in Photographic Intelligence" is circulated for information and review. This memorandum and other matters pertinent to this subject will be discussed at an early Intelligence Board meeting.



Executive Secretary

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Attachment

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MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Central Intelligence  
SUBJECT : U. S. Organizations Involved in  
Photographic Intelligence

1. This memorandum is for information only. It contains a general background discussion of the various organizations in the U.S. Government involved in photographic intelligence.

2. CIA

a. The Photographic Intelligence Center of CIA performs a centralized service of common concern for the intelligence community with regard to the processing of aerial photography collected by CIA sources. In addition, it performs photo interpretation and produces photographic intelligence reports in response to CIA requirements. It also participates in the production of joint photographic intelligence reports with the U.S. Army and Navy.

b. CIA/PIC has a  About  of these people are classed as photo interpreters.

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c. The Photographic Intelligence Center has the latest processing and precision instrument equipment. This equipment is generally adequate for the present work load although some items of equipment are still to be delivered. The Photographic Intelligence Center has been the leader in

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the intelligence community in developing and/or procuring improved equipment.

d. The Photographic Intelligence Center is in temporary quarters which are not suitable for permanent occupation and which will not be adequate to accommodate any substantial increase in work load.

3. NAVY

a. The Navy photographic intelligence effort is directed by ONI. The effort is devoted to supporting the Navy mission and participating in joint photographic intelligence projects with the Army and CIA. The major Navy organization directly engaged in photo intelligence is the Navy Photographic Interpretation Center at Suitland, Maryland. The Navy Photographic Interpretation Center until recently was administratively controlled by the Bureau of Aeronautics and the split responsibility between Bureau of Aeronautics and the Office of Naval Intelligence may have been an inhibiting factor in the development of Naval photographic intelligence.

b. There are approximately  photo interpreters in the U. S. Navy of whom about  are actually engaged in work directly related to work of this specialty. Of these

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25X1 about ☐ are employed at the Navy Photographic Interpretation  
25X1 Center. About ☐ of these Navy photo interpreters work at  
the CIA Photographic Intelligence Center. The total complement  
of the Photographic Interpretation Center including laboratory  
technicians, etc., is approximately ☐ 25X1

c. Navy Photographic Interpretation Center has an excellent  
building with good basic post World War II equipment and is in  
the process of procuring more modern equipment comparable  
to that held by CIA, but a good bit of it remains to be delivered.

d. The Navy wants to expand its photographic intelligence  
effort if the work load expands.

e. The intelligence components of the headquarters of  
both the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets have small photographic  
intelligence units.

4. ARMY

a. Like the Navy, the Army photographic intelligence  
effort is directed by the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,  
but the main work is actually carried out by the Army Photo-  
graphic Intelligence Center with headquarters at Ft. Holabird,  
Md. The mission of the Army Photographic Intelligence Center  
is to support the Army mission and participate in joint

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photographic intelligence projects with the Navy and CIA.

25X1 b. The Army is heavily committed to a close working relationship with CIA. Of approximately 100 Army photo interpreters, between [ ] are working at CIA/PIC and elsewhere in the Washington area. The remainder are working at Ft. Holabird on projects of interest only to the Army.

c. The Army has no separate laboratory or other photo processing organizations but depends heavily on support by the CIA/PIC.

d. The Army is building a photo intelligence laboratory at the Army Map Service which should be completed in 1960. It will be equipped with the latest processing and photo interpretation equipment and has been designed to complement the capability of CIA/PIC. The Army plans to increase its photo intelligence strength to about

25X1 [ ] by the end of fiscal 1960, and if the work load increases  
25X1 substantially, plans to reach [ ] by the end of calendar 1960.

5. AIR FORCE

a. The Air Force has by far the largest number of photo interpreters in the United States. The number is currently about 1,500, although all of these are not directly employed in photo interpretation, and the Air Force's photographic intelligence effort is broken down into a number of organizations with varying degrees

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of capabilities in this field. The Air Force has been quite active in photo interpretation but has chosen to do this throughout its photographic intelligence structure rather than concentrate its efforts in a joint center as the Army, Navy and CIA do. Various Air Force organizations active in photo interpretation maintain working relationships with CIA/PIC.

b. AFCIN-1A2, RECONNAISSANCE BRANCH. The Reconnaissance Branch has a total strength of 34 of which 20 are photo interpreters. This is the only unit in the Air Force headquarters which produces photographic intelligence reports. The Reconnaissance Branch also lets contracts for photographic intelligence work to appropriately cleared Government and civilian agencies.

c. AFCIN-3, DIRECTORATE OF TARGETS. The Directorate of Targets makes extensive use of photographic intelligence in producing air target materials. This work is done primarily by intelligence analysts with training in photo interpretation. The Directorate of Targets also uses contracts with other Government and civilian agencies and receives considerable support from the Aeronautical Chart and Information Center.

d. AFCIN-4, AIR TECHNICAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER.  
The Air Technical Intelligence Center produces technical intelligence

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25X1 for the Air Force. Its photographic intelligence effort is concentrated in a division of about ☐ people. ATIC also has good precision processing and analytic equipment.

e. AERONAUTICAL CHART AND INFORMATION CENTER.

The Aeronautical Chart and Information Center is responsible for producing aeronautical charts and other data for use in targeting. A division of about 200 people including a number of photo interpreters is working on photographic material. This division has a good laboratory and good up-to-date analytic equipment, although some equipment is still to be delivered. ACIC has tentative plans to expand this organization to about 400 people.

f. AIR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMAND. The Air Research and Development Command, through Rome Air Development Center and Wright Air Development Center, awards numerous contracts for the development of photo intelligence equipment, techniques, and training.

g. AIR TRAINING COMMAND. The Air Training Command operates the photo interpreter's courses at Shepherd Air Force Base.

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h. RECONNAISSANCE TECHNICAL SQUADRONS. The total strength of the Reconnaissance Technical Squadrons is slightly over  are photo interpreters. The Reconnaissance Technical Squadrons are assigned to Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, Far East Air Force, and the U.S. Air Force Europe. These squadrons are the organic units established to provide photographic intelligence for the Air Force. Their photo interpretation capabilities vary, depending on the nature of the command to which they are attached and whether their primary mission includes targets intelligence and/or electronics intelligence in addition to straight photographic intelligence. These squadrons produce most of the Air Force's photographic intelligence reports. The group at SAC Headquarters, totaling over 800 people, specializes in target revision and photographic intelligence reports on subjects of special interest to the Air Force. They are now building a good precision laboratory and have tentative plans to expand if there is any expansion in the work load.

i. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. The Air Studies Division at the Library of Congress supports various Air Force special studies. About 25 persons in this division do a certain amount of photo interpretation although the organization has no laboratory and no plans

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for further expansion.

6. In addition to the exploitation of aerial photography for intelligence purposes, the military services and CIA all use aerial photography to a certain extent in normal mapping and other geographic activities. Most of the people so engaged have some skill at photo interpretation which could be used in an emergency.

/s/

ROBERT AMORY, JR.  
Deputy Director (Intelligence)

**NATIONAL**  
**PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION**  
**CENTER**

